

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 001010

SIPDIS

DOJ FOR TED ULLYOT AND BRUCE SWARTZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES MEETINGS WITH SPANISH COUNTERPARTS

REF: MADRID 983

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Bob Manzanares; reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Summary. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales held bilateral meetings with Minister of Interior Jose Antonio Alonso and Minister of Justice Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar on the margins of his March 10-11 visit to Spain to represent the USG at the commemoration honoring the victims of the March 11, 2004 Madrid train bombings. Attorney General Gonzales extended invitations to both ministers to visit Washington for meetings with him and other USG law enforcement, judicial, and security agencies; both accepted and said they would follow up with proposed dates. The discussion with Interior Minister Alonso focused on counterterrorism cooperation and meeting participants identified specific new projects on which to collaborate. At the Ministry of Justice, the Attorney General and Minister Aguilar discussed Spain's efforts to combat terrorism and organized crime. Aguilar invited Attorney General Gonzales to attend a June 2006 conference of Latin American Ministers of Justice in the Canary Islands. Following the meeting, the two sides released a joint statement announcing the formation of a working group to study ways to improve counterterrorism cooperation (see para 9). The atmosphere in both meetings was warm and friendly, laying the groundwork for productive meetings in Washington for the two ministers. End Summary.

//MINISTER OF INTERIOR//

2. (C) Attorney General Gonzales, accompanied by Charge, AG Chief of Staff Ted Ulliot, and Deputy Assistant Attorney General Bruce Swartz met with Minister of Interior Alonso on March 10 following the conclusion of the Madrid Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security. Alonso was accompanied by Deputy Minister of the Interior Antonio Camacho (DCI equivalent), Senior Adviser on Terrorism Fernando Reinares, and Foreign Policy Adviser Arturo Avello. Attorney General Gonzales began by thanking Alonso for Spain's close cooperation on counter-terrorism investigations and invited Alonso to Washington for meetings with USG counterparts. Alonso thanked the Attorney General for the invitation and said his staff would follow up with the Embassy to set a date.

3. (C) In a side discussion with Deputy Minister Camacho, Swartz suggested that it could be useful to strengthen bilateral cooperation against terrorism and organized crime by working on specific projects to build up contacts between Spanish and USG law enforcement officials. Swartz ventured two possible projects:

A) Meetings between counterterrorism experts from each side working on the March 11 Madrid train bombings case to share information that may help close remaining investigative gaps. On the USG side, participants would include agents from the FBI's New York Field Office.

B) Meetings between experts from each side working on identity theft cases perpetrated by Russian organized crime groups. U.S. Secret Service, FBI, and prosecutors could represent the USG on this issue.

Camacho responded enthusiastically to Swartz's proposal.

//MINISTRY OF JUSTICE//

4. (C) Attorney General Gonzales met with Minister of Justice Aguilar on March 11, accompanied by Charge, Ulliot, Swartz, and Acting Legat Lou Arguello. Aguilar's team included Deputy Minister of Justice Luis Lopez Guerra, Elvira Tejeda of the Spanish Attorney General's office, and other senior advisers. Attorney General Gonzales invited Aguilar to visit Washington and Aguilar accepted the invitation. Minister Aguilar invited the Attorney General to attend the June 2006 Conference of Latin American Ministers of Justice, which Spain will host in the Canary Islands. Attorney General Gonzales said he hoped he would be able to attend, but did not commit to the event.

5. (C) Attorney General Gonzales discussed the Patriot Act and asked Aguilar whether he felt Spain had sufficient laws

in place to confront terrorism. Aguilar said he was confident that Spain's current law were strong enough, pointing out that many had been put in place during the government's decades-long struggle to subdue ETA terrorism. He noted the considerable international debate regarding USG counter-terrorism policy since the September 11 attacks and said that it was not Spain's place to "interfere" with USG policy unless there was a specific Spanish interest. Aguilar cited the case of the Spanish-national Guantanamo detainee Hamed Abd al Rahman Ahmed, returned to Spain in February 2004, as one such case. Attorney General Gonzales said that the USG had no interest in unnecessarily detaining foreign nationals at Guantanamo, but wanted assurances that receiving countries could prevent transferred individuals from participating in future terrorist activities. He said that the President had determined to act boldly against terrorism, but accepted the U.S. courts' authority to set the limits of the USG's response.

16. (C) Aguilar reflected on the difficulty of managing his broad portfolio, which includes, for example, oversight of the government's relations with religious organizations, supervision of immigration policies and procedures, and ensuring compliance by Spanish entities with equal opportunity laws for women. He discussed the ongoing sea-change in Spain's demographic and religious landscape, with much of the change being driven by a massive influx of immigrants from Morocco, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.

17. (C) On bilateral judicial cooperation, the representative from the Spanish Attorney General's office expressed hope that Spain and the USG could build on the December 2004 signing of the bilateral protocol to the U.S.-EU Mutual Legal Assistance (MLAT) and Extradition treaties to streamline the procedures for MLAT requests and work together on terrorism finance issues. The Attorney General said he looked forward to making progress with Spain on both matters and the USG participants repeated the suggestions in para 3 for joint action on the March 11 investigation and on identity theft by Russian organized crime groups.

//COMMENT//

18. (C) The visits to Washington of Ministers Alonso and Aguilar will represent an excellent opportunity to deepen our counter-terrorism cooperation with the GOS, as well as to discuss related issues such as border security, passport security, and judicial cooperation. Also, Minister of Interior Alonso is a trusted personal friend of President Zapatero and it would be useful to impress upon him the USG's broader objectives/concerns with respect to U.S.-Spain relations. We will work with both ministers to arrange travel dates and will follow up with recommended meetings in Washington for each.

//TEXT OF JOINT AG-MOJ STATEMENT//

19. (U)Begin Text:

JOINT STATEMENT BY UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL ALBERTO GONZALES AND SPANISH JUSTICE MINISTER JUAN FERNANDO LOPEZ AGUILAR REGARDING THE CREATION OF AN EXPERT WORKING GROUP DEDICATED TO COOPERATING MORE CLOSELY ON COUNTER-TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS

March 11, 2005

The horrific events here in Madrid one year ago today and those of September 11th in the United States demonstrate that terrorism presents a serious threat to both our great nations, and the rest of the world. Combating this threat is a common interest we all share. The United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain realize that truly effective international cooperation is absolutely vital to combating this threat. While the current level of cooperation between our two countries in combating terrorism is excellent, we recognize that we must always strive to improve in this area.

Consequently, on this important day, the United States Attorney General and the Spanish Minister of Justice along with the Spanish Attorney General wish to announce the creation of an expert working group, including both Spanish and U.S. terrorism prosecutors and experts in international cooperation, dedicated to finding ways to cooperate even more closely in counter-terrorism criminal investigations and prosecutions. The group will meet regularly to exchange experiences and methods for conducting such criminal investigations and seek ways to improve cooperation in combating international terrorism.

End Text.
MANZANARES